St. Mark's Episcopal Church

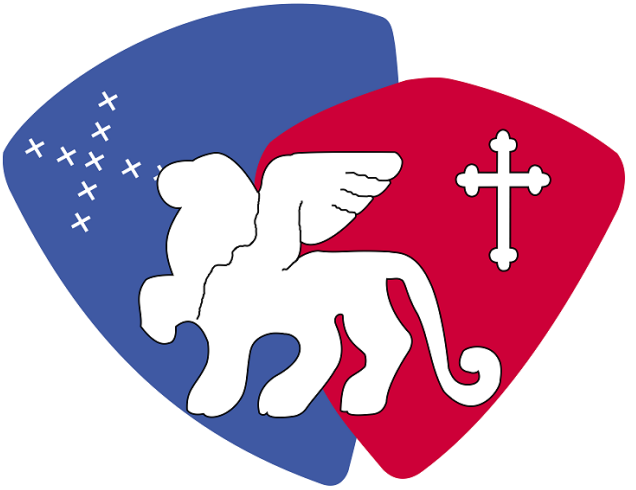
Our Vision:

To grow in Christ through worship and service

Our Mission:

Called to be Christ Centered

Touching Lives + Transforming Hearts + Teaching God's Word



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The First Sunday of Advent

Holy Eucharist, Rite II

November 29, 2026, 10:30 AM

Welcome Home to Saint Mark's!

It is our privilege to worship with you this morning! Please know that all baptized Christians regardless of Church denomination, and all who seek a deeper knowledge and love of God in Christ are most welcome to receive the bread and wine of the Holy Eucharist. Gluten-free wafers are available for those with allergies. Children are also welcome and encouraged to participate in all services at St. Mark's.

If this is your first time at St. Mark's, please complete a *Visitor Card* and let us know about your visit, especially if you have a specific need or prayer request. Visitor Cards are found in the pew racks. If you would like additional information about our many ministries and activities, speak to one of our Ushers or Greeters, or stop by the Parish Hall during the fellowship hour that follows each service. We would be honored to speak with you in person.

If you would like to make a financial offering or contribution you can do so by scanning this QR Code or via our website at www.stmarksgastonia.org

Again, Welcome Home to St. Mark's!
May God's peace and love enfold you.

Note: It is the custom in The Episcopal Church to prepare for worship by gathering in reverent silence and prayer, and during the worship service, stand for praise, sit for instruction, and, as you are able, kneel for prayer. Please respect the devotional needs of others by turning off cellular telephones and electronic devices, and by speaking with hushed voices.

All scripture passages are taken from the *New Revised Standard Version Bible,* © 1989, Division of Christian Education in the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used with permission. All rights reserved.

The Season of Advent

Liturgical Notes

Today marks the start of the ***New Liturgical Year*** of the Christian Church which begins with the Season of Advent; the four Sundays before Christmas. Throughout this Season our prayers and hymns build upon the dual themes of Christ's return in glory – his 2nd Advent, as well as his 1st Advent at Bethlehem over two thousand years ago. Our scriptures, hymns, and music reflect the themes of Christ's return: a sense of longing, alertness, and watchfulness for the King whom, scripture tells us, will come quickly.

Similarly, our liturgy is markedly different from at other times of the Church year. You will notice increased periods of silence throughout the service. Such change is observed not because Advent is a season of repentance per se, but rather, because it is a season of *personal preparation* and preparation involves taking time for silent reflection. Advent calls each of us to prepare our hearts and minds, to embrace once again all of God's ways and values, make amends with God and one's neighbor and, thereby, be fully prepared to greet with joy the Creator of all who is the Author of our Salvation.

Upon the 3rd Sunday in Advent, our prayers, hymns, and scriptures begin to focus more attention on the 1st Advent of our Lord: that first Christmas and the depth of meaning – the life-changing impact – of the child at Bethlehem on the entire course of human history and that which is to come. Again, there is a sense of longing, alertness, and watchfulness for the Christ child born at Christmas and who offers to be born each day in our hearts.

Therefore, we invite you to ***"Prepare the way of the Lord"*** with increased devotion and prayer throughout this Season. May our worship services during this Advent Season draw each and every one of us into a deeper relationship with God in Christ.

Holy Eucharist, Rite II
The Word of God

Prelude:

Greetings and Announcements *Pages 12-16*

The Processional Hymn: #57 "Lo, He Comes With Clouds Descending"

Lighting of the First Candle of Advent:

(The following prayer is offered as the Candle is lit)

Lord, God of our ancestors, you called the patriarchs to live by the light of faith and to journey confident in the hope of your abiding presence. Grant us the grace to be obedient to your call and ready and watchful to receive your Christ, a lamp to our feet and a light to our path; for you are our light and our salvation.

People: **Blessed be God for ever.**

Opening Acclamation: *from Enriching our Worship*

Blessed (†) are you, holy and living One.

People: **You come to your people and set them free.**

The Collect for Purity: BCP 355

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Summary of the Law:

Hear what our Lord Jesus Christ said: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.

The Response: **"The Kyrie"** **#S-91**

Lord, have mercy upon us. *(Sung three times)*
Christ, have mercy upon us. *(Sung three times)*
Lord, have mercy upon us. *(Sung three times)*

The Exhortation to Confession:

You who do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbors, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways: Draw near with faith, and make your humble confession to Almighty God, devoutly kneeling.

All kneel as they are able.

A Prayer of Confession: *(All pray together)* *(From Rite I)*

Almighty and most merciful Father,
we have erred and strayed from your ways like lost sheep,
we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts,
we have offended against your holy laws,
we have left undone those things which we ought to have done,
and we have done those things which we ought not to have done.
O Lord, have mercy upon us,
spare those who confess their faults,
and restore those who are penitent,
according to your promises declared
unto humankind in Christ Jesus our Lord;
and grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake,
that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and
sober life, to the glory of your holy Name. Amen.

The Absolution:

The Almighty and merciful Lord grant you absolution (†) and remission of all your sins, true repentance, amendment of life, and the grace and consolation of his Holy Spirit.
People: **Amen.**

The Collect of the Day:

The Lord be with you.
People: **And also with you.**

Let us pray.

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ

came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

People: **Amen.**

(All are seated for the lessons from scripture. Children exit for Children's Chapel)

The Lessons

The First Lesson: **Isaiah 64:1-9**

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence--as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil--to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence! When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him. You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways.

But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed. We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.

Yet, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD, and do not remember iniquity forever. Now consider, we are all your people.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.
People: **Thanks be to God.**

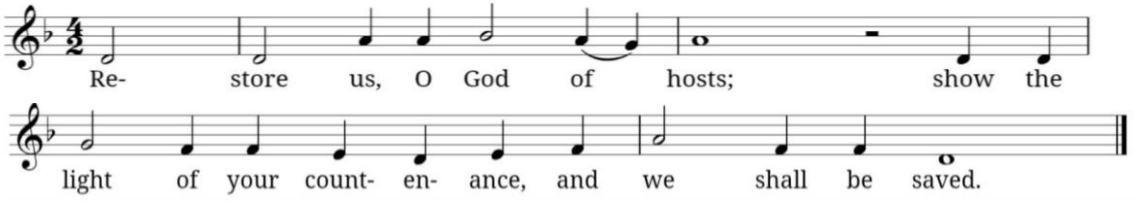
(Time for silent reflection follows the reading.)

The Response Psalm follows as printed on the next page.

The Response: **Psalm 80:1-7,16-18**

(The congregation sings the noted Antiphon. The choir sings the verses)

Antiphon:



CHOIR:

Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock;
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.
In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh,
stir up your strength and come to help us.

Antiphon: (above)

CHOIR:

O Lord God of hosts, how long will you be angered despite the prayers of your people? You have fed them with the bread of tears; you have given them bowls of tears to drink.
You have made us the derision of our neighbors, and our enemies laugh us to scorn.

Antiphon:

CHOIR:

Let your hand be upon the man of your right hand, the son of man you have made so strong for yourself. And so will we never turn away from you; give us life, that we may call upon your Name.

Antiphon:

The Second Lesson: **1 Corinthians 1:3-9**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind-- just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you-- so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will also strengthen

you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.
People: **Thanks be to God.**

The Sequence Hymn: #601 "O Day of God, Draw Nigh"

The Holy Gospel: **Mark 13:24-37**

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.
People: **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

Jesus said, "In those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

"From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

"But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake."

The Gospel of the Lord.
People: **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

The Sermon: The Rev. R. Allan McCaslin

A time of silence follows the Sermon. Please remain seated until the Altar Ministers stand.

The Renewal of Baptismal Vows: **BCP pg. 292**

The Prayers of the People Form III **BCP pg. 387**

(The Leader and People pray responsively)

Leader: Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church;

People: **That we all may be one.**

Leader: Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you;

People: **That your Name may be glorified by all people.**

Leader: We pray for all bishops, priests, and deacons;

People: **That they may be faithful ministers of your Word and Sacraments.**

Leader: We pray for Donald, our President, Josh, our Governor, for our elected officials; and for all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world;

People: **That there may be justice and peace on the earth.**

Leader: Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;

People: **That our works may find favor in your sight.**

Leader: We pray for those who are in harm's way, for those who have asked for prayers, for those who are sick, in sorrow, need, or any adversity.

Have compassion on those who suffer from any grief or trouble;

People: **That they may be delivered from their distress.**

Leader: Give to _____, and all the departed eternal rest.

People: **Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

Leader: We praise you for your saints who have entered into joy;

People: **May we also come to share in your heavenly kingdom.**

Leader: Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

I invite your prayers of intercession either silently or aloud.

In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer, we pray for the Anglican Church of Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hu

In the Diocesan Cycle of Prayer, we pray for Churches of St. Andrew at Bessemer City and Canton.

We pray for those who travel this week.

We give thanks for those celebrating birthdays this week, and for those celebrating wedding anniversaries.

We give thanks for those who serve with the Men's Fellowship Group, and for all the ministries and activities of this parish, and pray that God will bless all who partake of, or serve in them.

The Priest offers a concluding Collect saying,

Hasten, O Father, the coming of your kingdom; and grant that we your servants, who now live by faith, may with joy behold your Son at his coming in glorious majesty; even Jesus Christ, our only Mediator and Advocate. ***People:*** **Amen.**

All stand.

The Peace:

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Please greet one another in the Name of the Lord.

The Birthday Prayer: **BCP pg. 830**

The Anniversary Prayer: **BCP pg. 441**

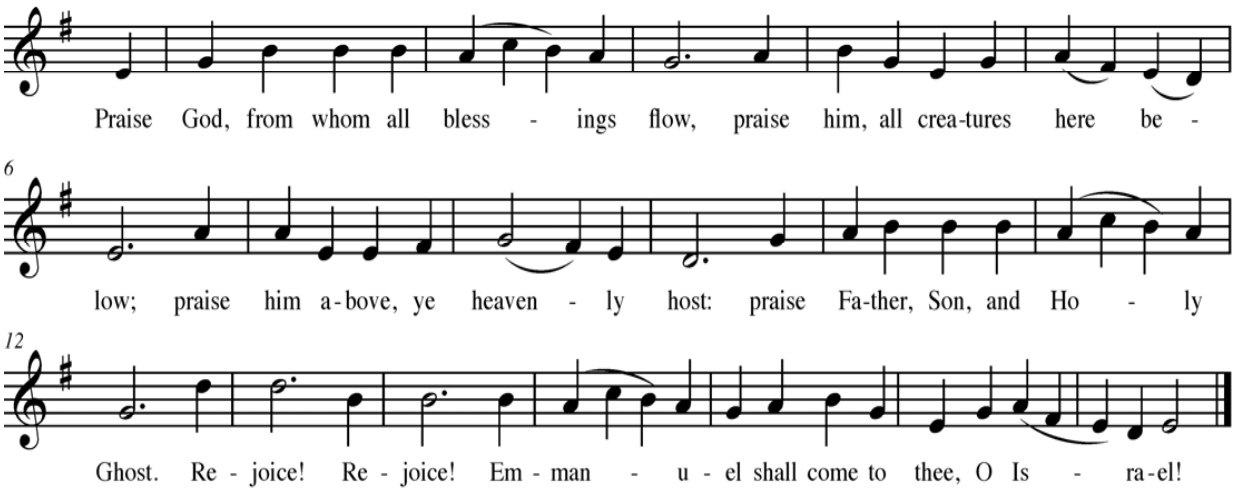
Concerning The Holy Communion

Instructions on receiving Communion are now presented.

The Holy Communion

The Offertory Anthem:

Advent Presentation Hymn: **"The Doxology"**



The Great Thanksgiving
Eucharistic Prayer A

The Sursum Corda: **BCP pg. 361**

The Sanctus: ***#S-122***

(All then kneel as they are able)

The Lord's Prayer: **BCP pg. 364**

The Breaking of the Bread: (The Fraction)

The Fraction Anthem: ***#S-153***

The Ministration of Communion:

Please come to the Altar as directed by the Ushers. Please wait to be dismissed.

Hymns during the Communion:

#309 "O Food to Pilgrims Given"
#54 "Savior of the Nations, Come"
#324 "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence"

An extended time for silent prayer and reflection precedes and follows each communion hymn.

The Post-communion Prayer: **BCP pg. 365**

A Benediction in Advent:

May Almighty God, by whose providence our Savior Christ came among us in great humility, sanctify you with the light of his blessing and set you free from all sin.

And the blessing of God Almighty, (†) the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you forever.

People: **Amen.**

Processional Hymn: #616 "Hail to the Lord's Anointed"

The Dismissal:

Let us bless the Lord!

People: **Thanks be to God!**

Postlude:

The greenery on the altar is given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Judith Maloney's father, Jack Robinson and in celebration of Lainey Lampke's 13th birthday by Eric and Shelley Lampke.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

TODAY, SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2026

The First Sunday of Advent

8:00 am	Holy Eucharist, Rite I
9:00 am	**"Annual Advent Wreath Making Adventure!"**
	Gather for fellowship and camaraderie in the Parish Hall
10:30 am	Holy Eucharist, Rite II,
12:00 pm	Fellowship time – Parish Hall

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2026

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

"Advent Saturday"

Sponsored by the St. Veronica Chapter of the Daughters of the King.

All children (Kindergarten to 9th grade) are invited to gather in the Parish Hall on Saturday, December 5, 2026, from 10:00 am to 12 Noon for gift bags, crafts, songs, Advent activities and much more!

Our Daughters of the King will be on hand to supervise this event so that parents can "take a break" from childcare that morning, enjoy some quiet time, and even sneak in some time for holiday shopping!

Please be sure to use sign up sheet posted in the Parish Hall so that we can secure appropriate craft supplies and snacks.

Contact Bonnie Kieffer with any questions 845-242-3178

We Could Use More Blankets

As the weather gets colder, we have more demand for blankets. We can use blankets of all sizes, but what are needed most are fleece, or faux fleece, throw blankets; usually about 50x60 in size. They usually come packaged in a roll, and their price ranges from $5 to $12 a piece. Thank you!

Caring Cupboard Immediate Needs

We have a few emergency needs for our Caring Cupboard. Thank you!

- Canned beans (no green beans please),
- boxes or cups of Mac and Cheese,
- cheese/peanut butter crackers,
- Beanie Weenies.

Advent Study Series
Sunday Mornings at 9:15 am

"Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord"

Throughout the Season of Advent, our weekly worship services begin with the lighting of candles on our Advent Wreath. Each candle corresponds to the theme and scripture lessons of the day, as well as encourage everyone to reflect more deeply on what difference Christ's presence makes in their lives each and every day.

To assist with your reflections, our Adult Christian Education Classes will focus on the following:

Advent II – Hope <u>and</u> Peace: Confident in the promised return of Christ at the end of this age, we will explore how that Hope directs our daily choices, and acknowledging the presence of God among and thing us brings a sense of Peace to our very souls.

Advent III –Joy! Deep spiritual gladness that endures regardless of circumstances is a hallmark of the Advent Season. We will explore how reconciliation and introspection leads to a sense of wholeness that "gladdens our hearts".

Advent IV – Love: How does reflecting on our hope, peace, and joy at the Advent of the Christ (at Bethlehem and in the age come) continue to impact our choices and make a difference in this community and world?

NEXT SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2026
The Second Sunday of Advent

8:00 am	Holy Eucharist, Rite I
9:00 am	Fellowship time – Parish Hall
9:15 am	**Adult Christian Education Class – Balthis Room**
10:30 am	Holy Eucharist, Rite II
12:00 pm	Fellowship time – Parish Hall

CHRISTMAS AT ST. MARK'S

Gather for the joyous celebration of *The Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ* amid the quiet beauty of St. Mark's Episcopal Church.

Christmas Eve: *Thursday, December 24*

5:00 pm Holy Eucharist and Children's Christmas Pageant

10:00 pm Holy Eucharist and Candlelight celebration of Christmas

Christmas Day: *Friday, December 25*

10:30 am – *"Come just as you Are."*

A quiet observance of the Holy Eucharist

The First Sunday After Christmas: *Sunday, December 27*

10:00 am – Holy Eucharist, Rite II

O Come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!

SCHEDULE FOR LAY LEADERSHIP POSITIONS – DECEMBER 2026

	December 6 2nd Sunday of Advent	December 13 3rd Sunday of Advent	December 20 4th Sunday of Advent	Christmas Eve 5pm-Family Service	Christmas Eve Eucharist-10pm	December 27 5th Sunday of Advent
Lay Reader 8:00 AM	Bonnie Kieffer	Ed Galda	Pat Townsend			Linda Galda
Lay Reader 10:30 AM	OT: John Watts NT: Nancy Byers Prayers: Nancy Byers	Lesson & Carols : Appointed Readers	OT: Richard Martinez NT: Rachel Varriale Prayers: Rachel Varriale	OT: Leslie Harris NT: Lesslie Harris Prayers: n/a	OT: Judy Jackson-Malina NT: Judy Jackson-Malina Prayers: Judy Jackson-Malina	OT: Elizabeth Whitford NT: Barbara Hartsell Prayers: Barbara Hartsell
Ushers	Blaine Rudisill Cookie Rudisill	HyCe Bull Steve Campbell	Bob Ridgeway Jessie Paradice	2 Volunteers Needed	2 Volunteers Needed	George Sowersby Chappell Harris
Greeters	Bev Bieker Marilyn Walters	John Fitzgerald Mary Fitzgerald	Fe McLaughlin Tim McLaughlin	2 Volunteers Needed	2 Volunteers Needed	TBD TBD
Acolytes	C: Emma Kate Griffin G: Jake Barker T: Mason McCarey T: Alex Griffin	C: Kenya Pond G: Kenslie DeCastro T: Ella Carsner T: Jack Carsner	C: Mason McCarey G: Elizabeth Whitford T: Joe Bieker T: Jessie Paradice	C: Tucker Doyne T: Ella Carsner T: Jack Carsner	C: Jessie Paradice	C: Elizabeth Whitford G: T: Joe Bieker T: Jessie Paradice
Nursery	Debbie Brake Judy Jackson-Malina	Debbie Brake	Debbie Brake Laurel Burns			Debbie Brake
Preacher	Deacon Cathy Wesson	Fr. McCaslin	Fr. McCaslin	Fr. McCaslin	Fr. McCaslin	Fr. McCaslin
Flowers	**Available for Sponsorship**	Marilyn Almerantz: In celebration of Sasha's birthday Kenna Watts: John & Kenna	**Available for Sponsorship**			**Available for Sponsorship**
Altar Guild	Yolanda Laine Pat Townsend	TBD	TBD			TBD
Coffee Hour	**Available for Sponsorship**	**Available for Sponsorship**	**Available for Sponsorship**			**Available for Sponsorship**
Vestry Lock-Up	Fe McLaughlin	Fe McLaughlin	Fe McLaughlin	Fe McLaughlin	Fe McLaughlin	Fe McLaughlin

CHURCH STAFF

The Rev. R. Allan McCaslin……*Interim Priest*
The Ven. Brenda M. Gilbert ..... *Archdeacon, Dio. of Western NC*
The Rev. Deacon Cathy Wesson ..... *Deacon*
Ms. Dionne Browning .....*Business Administrator*
Ms. Debbie Brake .....*Nursery*
Ms. Beverly Bieker……..... *Office Assistant*
Mr. Kris Kiser ..... *Church Sexton*

CURRENT VESTRY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

Mr. Eric Lampke, '27 ..... *Senior Warden, Bldgs-Grounds*
Mrs. Judy Jackson Malina, '26 .....*Junior Warden, Outreach*
Dr. Blaine Rudisill, '26 ..... *Pastoral Care*
Mrs. Suzanne Whatley, '25.....*Parish Life*
Mrs. Fe McLaughlin, '26 .....*Parish Life, Newcomers*
Ms. Marilyn Walters, '26 ..... *In-reach*
Mr. George Sowersby, '27 .....*Buildings and Grounds*
Mrs. Pat Townsend, '27..... *In-reach*
Ms. Dionne R. Browning.....*Vestry Clerk*
Mr. Steve Campbell..... *Treasurer*
Mrs. Kenna Watts .....*Assistant Treasurer*